

The Heterodyne

Newsletter of the West Valley Amateur Radio Association

November Meeting

Annual WVARA Elections

***DXpeditions and People
by Eric Guth, 4Z1UG / WA6IGR***

**Wednesday, November 13
Meeting Starts at 7pm**

Meeting Location:
American Red Cross,
Silicon Valley Chapter
2731 N. First Street at Plumeria Dr
(southwest corner) in San Jose

WVARA Repeaters (W6PIY)		
Band	Frequency	PL
6 Meters	52.580- MHz	151.4 Hz
2 Meters	147.39+ MHz	151.4 Hz
1.25 Meters	223.96- MHz	156.7 Hz
0.70 Meter	441.35+ MHz	88.5 Hz
0.23 Meter	1286.2- MHz	100 Hz

Club Net

WVARA's club net is on the W6PIY repeaters each Tuesday at 8:30 pm. All repeaters are linked together during the net. The net script can be found at www.wvara.org/net.html.

Visitors Are Welcome!

President's Letter

My time as your president is coming to a close soon, and every time a change happens in my life I find myself reflecting on what I learned. In this case that covers my time representing WVARA and by extension all my time in ham radio...so...without further ado, here is my Ham Radio Top 10:

10 – I got into the hobby because someone I knew thought I'd like it – and he was right. I was ten years old and he worked with my father, who were both hams. At the time, it didn't take much to administer a novice exam and he worked with me over a couple lunches one summer and before I knew it, I was licensed and running 5 wpm to someone across the state in the shack they had in the back of the building. It might have been a good way to keep me busy that summer so I wasn't bothering them, but it fascinated me and I haven't let go since. The point here is: you may know someone who would



really be interested in ham radio. They just don't know it yet.

9 - I have learned so much. I have learned so much more about these things than I ever expected: determining dipole lengths, making solid coax/connector solder joints, learning how to use an end mill and lathe to make solar tracking stations, 3D printing, lots of coding and Linux administration, the challenges of running two power systems in a van, and much, much more...and I still have so far to go. Every day, I find new things that make me go "Hmmm..." and "WOW!" and they usually sit in the corner of my mind, slowly churning and making me wonder how it works, how it could be improved, or how I could use it. Ham radio factors into a surprising percentage of those items.

8 - Connecting with the community is easy with a radio. Whether at the Maker Faire, Henry Coe State Park, Los Gatos Christmas Parade, 5k/10k runs, Gilroy Garlic parking, and many more events, ham radio operators interact with the public and help make things happen that otherwise might not be possible...and that doesn't include the really helpful times, like on the Hurricane Watch Net, ARES/RACES activations, or other such times of real need.

7 - It takes ten times as much time as I thought to do any one thing. I have spent HUNDREDS of hours simply cleaning up coax coils, resolving obscure software bugs, thinking about learning CW, and preparing for Field Day.

6 - It doesn't matter what you know or how well you know it. Someone else knows it ten times better. It amazes me when I run into someone who has forgotten ten times as much about something than I will ever know...and some of these things I thought I was pretty good at.

5 - Ham radio is full of advanced technology. To name but a few: things like 3D printing, SDR, and digital modes on all bands are a daily part of anyone learning ham radio. If that's not modern enough, I'm starting to look into how to use AI to predict solar weather. It's used for regular weather prediction all the time, so why not? Maybe there are some patterns that haven't yet been figured out.

4 - Long standing technology is full of things to learn about. Morse code is a fantastic solution to weak signal communications. HF is a band struggling with today's sheer quantity of intentional and unintentional RF emitters, but it is singular in its ability to propagate globally without repeating. How to use either of these effectively is not easy, and it takes time. Many, many books have been written about antennas, grounding, EMI, propagation, solar weather, and the like.

3 - Ham radio people are everywhere. It's easy to find them at a hamfest or at a club meeting, but I've run into them at different companies large and small, in restaurants, at a police station, at the beach, in the newspaper, and we usually end up having an interesting discussion about something or other. It's a fantastic ice breaker that works better than anything else I know. It's like suddenly having an old friend you just met.

2 - It's about more than just connecting with others. With those outside the hobby, I

hear things like “Why not just use a cell phone?” – to which I say it’s about much more than making a call. It’s about working with other people, learning, giving back to the community, helping others, and so much more than a phone call.

1 - The hobby is much more about the people than the technology. Though we learn and learn and learn, it’s when we get to do that with others that the power of the hobby comes through. The others involved have other experiences from what they learned that makes it all that much better. The activities are always more interesting in groups (ie- Field Day, CQP) than me sitting alone at my desk trying to figure out how to POST a message to an Arduino.

What are your top 10?

Thanks,
Bobby, K0XI

Field Day Results Now Posted: We’re #2!

The Field Day results for 2019 have been posted on the ARRL website, and WVARA’s score places us #2 out of 3112 participants in this year’s event. Good job, team!

(In case if you were wondering, last year we were #3.)

-73-

Jim, K6EI

WVARA Net Check-Ins (W6PIY)						
Tuesdays at 8:30 PM						
Call Sign	Name	10/08/19	10/15/19	10/22/19	10/29/19	11/05/19
Total		9	9	8	7	12
AA6RB	Roy			X		
AF6AE	Bill				X	X
AG6WH	Brian				X	
AI6NT	Henry	X				
AJ6LG	Jeff	X				X
K6CES	Chuck	X				
K6EI	Jim					X
K6QFO	Mike		X			
KC7XE	Stan					X
KF6EMB	Svend	X	X	X		
KK6HPF	Ross		X	X	X	
KK6VF	Kevin		NET	NET	NET	NET
KM6GVO	Erik	X				
N6BTU	Wayne	X	X			X
N6FYR	Matt	X	X	X		
N9CU	Andy					X
W6BG	Max	X				
W6ESL	Tom		X	X	X	X
W6IA	Mark		X	X	X	X
WB6JHI	Steve					X
WB6KHP	Dave	NET	X	X	X	X
WR3K	Greg					X

Setting an unplanned new CQP record in San Joaquin County

By Jim Peterson, K6EI

The California QSO Party (CQP) is held every year on the first weekend of October. The past few years, I have always spent CQP with the WVARA team in either Kings or Sierra County. Stations outside of the state try to work all of California's 58 counties for multipliers, which means that a CA station operating in a rare county can attract a lot of attention.

My daughter was about to get married, and this year our family was planning to spend the first weekend of October with her future in-laws vacationing near Yosemite. As a result, I had not made any plans to participate in the contest with WVARA.

However, a family member became unable to travel two days before the start of CQP, and so my availability during the contest was suddenly wide open. After chatting with Tom Dunbar, W6ESL, we made tentative plans to drive into the Central Valley midday on Saturday and operate for a few hours from one of the less populated counties.

I emailed Dean Wood (NCCC's organizer for this year's CQP) and told him about our plans. Dean's response was that there was one county (San Joaquin – SJOA) that was going to be seriously under-represented in the contest. He needed one or more hams to put SJOA on the air. Would Tom and I consider operating from there? Not only that, but Dean had already located an AirBnB in the middle of an almond orchard that was available. What an opportunity!

So Tom and I decided to do a last-minute, two-man Multi/Multi expedition to SJOA using the callsign N6ESL. (N6ESL is the callsign of the ESL Radio Club which was very active in the 1980s and 90s. Tom and I are two of the last remaining members.) For the contest, Tom would be in charge of SSB station and I would run the CW station.

Setting up a pair of portable stations in the middle of an almond orchard had several advantages – 1) the background RF noise level was quite low, 2) no pesky neighbors to worry about, and 3) there was adequate space for our antennas. As far as antennas were concerned, we kept it simple: no towers and no beams. Just two sets of dipoles.

There were just two limitations. The first was that the AirBnB owner planned to return by noon on Sunday, so we needed to begin teardown by 10am – five hours prior to the end of the contest. The other limitation with the almond orchard QTH was that there was only one spot where we could easily install our 40-foot push-up mast. But there was a cottonwood tree as well as a 20-foot flagpole next to the house that we also could use to hoist up our second set of dipoles.



Our CW station used a rotatable dipole up 30 feet for 10/15/20 and inverted Vees (up 40 feet) for 40 and 80.



We used the 20ft flagpole in front of the house to support a 20/40m dipole for SSB, and the tree to support a dipole for 75m SSB.

As you'd expect, the contest was a blast. Running from a rare county meant that we saw plenty of action, with Saturday evening being particularly busy. The pileups on 40CW for this rare county were a real adrenalin rush.

We made a total of 639 QSOs with the majority of those on CW. We also achieved 55 of the 58 multipliers — all but ND, AB and NT. Our estimated score for the contest was around 98,000 points, putting us well above the previous SJOA M/M low power record of 74,980 which had been set near the peak of the last sunspot cycle. Not bad for a last-minute endeavor!



Tom, W6ESL, was in charge of SSB.



Me running our CW station

BOD Minutes & Q3 Financial Data Posted

The minutes from the WVARA October Board of Directors meeting, and 3rd quarter financial data, have been posted to the club website.

To view:

Go to wvara.org

Select the "MEMBERS ONLY" tab on your desktop or mobile device

Enter the password you currently use to access the membership roster, the username is not needed

The Board welcomes any input or comments.

Many thanks to our webmaster Larry, KG6ENF, for all of his assistance.

73, Mark W6IA

WVARA Secretary

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